



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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**Testimony
submitted to the
Education Committee**

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SB 1197 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

**SB 1198 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCHOOL INDOOR AIR
QUALITY WORKING GROUP.**

SB 1199 AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITY IN EDUCATION.

SB 1200 AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION.

**SB 1201 AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR
SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS
STATUTES.**

HB 6879 AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION.

HB 6880 AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

**HB 6881 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES
RELATED TO EDUCATOR COMPENSATION AND PARAEDUCTORS.**

HB 6882 AN ACT CONCERNING MANDATE RELIEF.

HB 6883 AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

**HB 6884 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF
THE TEACHING PROFESSION.**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education supports SB 1197, An Act Concerning Workforce Development, sections 2 and 3. Dual enrollment programs and early college programs help to have students make transitioning to higher education a seamless effort. Support to build the pipeline of healthcare careers while in secondary education is one way to help with the health care staffing shortage. Likewise, the opportunity to offer classes in the paraeducator field while in high school, will strengthen the pipeline for those students who value aiding fellow students and would help with the shortage.

The work on indoor air quality is ongoing and will take a long term commitment by the state and school districts. CAFE supports SB 1198, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the School Indoor Air Quality Working Group. The need for a delay in reporting back to the Legislature reiterates the complexity in working toward an equitable solution for all. The increase in the annual funding from last year also reflects to magnitude of need. CAFE appreciates the state's commitment.

CAFE supports section 9 of SB 1199, An Act Concerning Equity in Education, the opportunity to grow the pool of educator applicants with higher education educators would be an asset.

CAFE Supports SB 1200, An Act Concerning Special Education section 1, the exclusion of ARPA funding when calculating a board's net current expenditure for the special education excess cost reimbursement grant. Section 6 has CAFE concerned about the removal of emergency use of seclusion. Removal of a student from a situation immediately where they may be harming students and staff would be a first response in an emergency. Staff would need the flexibility to utilize their best judgement.

CAFE supports SB 1201, An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Revisions to the School Building Projects Statutes, section 3's increase in reimbursement percentages is appreciated as the costs of construction and goods has risen. The deduction from project cost of federal funds prior to computation of the grant allows districts to utilize more resources to fund projects.

The teacher shortage has CAFE concerned and thus supporting HB 6879, An Act Concerning Teacher Certification in section 1, because it enlarges the pool of teacher candidates by changing teaching endorsement from grades 1-6 to grades k-6.

CAFE has concerns about the implementation of HB 6880, An Act Concerning Assorted Revisions to the Education Statutes. Section 1, CAFE would like legislators to give teachers flexibility to have timely supplemental curriculum resources posted. The roll out of the state's model curriculum would perhaps be a better time to consider these changes. Allowing a period of comment at each meeting, after a curriculum has been just been adopted a few months ago does not seem to allow district staff to tackle new work if they are continuing to respond to decided issues. Parents are a part of curriculum committees and are able to offer perspective at the beginning of curriculum work. Board of education meetings are structured so that public comment is relevant to agenda items.

Section 2 on mandating the posting of the nutritional value of school meals would be burdensome to districts who have many diverse choices and value having an ever changing amount of choices for students. A member of the Hartford staff testified to this point just last week.

CAFE strongly opposes the use of state time and resources to study the implementation of a school voucher program in section 6. State resources are being utilized for universal and targeted needs at our local and regional public schools.

CAFE opposes the mandated 30 minutes set for lunch for students. This would disrupt the schedule, possible impact passing times and potentially lengthen the school day which would lead to a bargaining consideration. Section 8, boards of education already post their agenda on their websites and associated documents. Posting requirements, lessening the use of paper and the pandemic, has had boards previously make these decisions.

In HB 6881, An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes Related to Educator Compensation and Paraeducators, section 3 is an added burden to districts to report. Section 9, CABE asks for state and local fiscal impact of the proposed minimal salaries. Section 10 limits the flexibility of districts to work with staff who might work less hours. Section 11, MEHIP, that offering ought to be a consideration in bargaining.

CABE seeks to amend HB 6882, An Act Concerning Mandate Relief. The professional development working group has completed its work for now and the group would like legislators to consider these changes:

Implementation

- Provide greater flexibility for districts to determine frequency/reoccurrence of trainings;
- Differentiate which staff are required to complete specific training and connect completion of training for compliance with certification renewal in an online platform; and
- For any new training requirements, allow for, at minimum, a 1-year preparation period before requirements go into effect, along with state resources for implementation.

Content

- Delete redundancies in C.G.S. 10-220a and 10-148a that overlap with requirements outlined elsewhere in statute;
- Clarify the distinction between in-service training (C.G.S. 10-220a) and professional learning that advances teaching and learning (C.G.S. 10-148a); and
- Modify language in 10-220a and 10-148a based on working group recommendations.

Process

- Tie professional development requirements to certification renewal.
- Given the excessive number of hours required to complete all statutorily-required trainings the working group recommends establishing a formal Educator Professional Development Council to serve as a long-term solution for ongoing review and modification of past and future legislation.

CABE is concerned with the ability of SDE to adequately staff yet another requirement in HB 6883, An Act Concerning Students with Developmental Disabilities. Section 1 establishes a transition service within SDE and CABE reminds legislators that the agency is currently struggling to fulfill its current workforce. The impact on already stressed special education staff, and the fiscal impact of education programs extended through age 22.

In HB 6884, An Act Concerning the Recruitment, Retention and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession, CABE would need to see the fiscal impact of section 2, that creates a tax credit for educators. The benefits proposed in section 3 should be subject to collective bargaining. Section 10, would require all students to have access to preschool if there is a delay in kindergarten entry. CABE is a part of a working group on play based learning, we look forward to clarification on the proposed

language in section 12. Section 13, proposes another restriction on the school schedule and should be subject to bargaining. Section 14, CABA is concerned about incorporating exit survey responses into the strategic school profile. CABA supports the rights of educators to utilize their expertise in implementing the curriculum. However, in section 22, the adoption of a broad “bill of rights” may have unintended consequences.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.